

South-South Migration and Sino-African Small Traders: A Comparative Study of Chinese in Senegal and Africans in China

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Abstract

China is today also becoming an important economic migration destination. Immigrants in China are from different continents and have settled for various reasons: study, work, business or trade. China's economic boom, trade liberalisation and modernisation have attracted many African migrants. The growing presence of African traders in China's 'city markets' and Chinese traders in African cities change global trade and migration patterns. If large number of Africans regularly travel to China (due to better connectivity between Chinese and major African cities), some have decided to immigrate to Guangzhou and Yiwu for trade and business purposes, thus adding to the traditional migration pattern a dimension – from almost exclusively South-North to also South-South. This paper is centred on a comparative analysis of Sino-African traders in Senegal and China. The purpose of the study is to see how migration patterns have expanded from South-North to South-South (particularly in the case of Sino-African relations) that today is the mainstream of international migration. It explores the composition, background, profile, business organisation and networks of Chinese traders in Africa (Senegal) and African traders (including traders from North Africa) in China (Yiwu). Drawing on interviews, group discussion and participant observation in Yiwu, China, and Dakar, Senegal, it shows that there are increasing flows of Chinese traders in Senegal and African traders in China related to the growing relations between China and African countries during the past decades. They contribute to boosting Sino-African trade volume and are part of South-South trade and migration phenomenon. Through their trade activities, they contribute to socio-economic development in their home and host country.

Keywords: South-South cooperation, trade, migration, China, Africa, small traders, trade networks, socio-economic development

1. Introduction

South-South cooperation is growing in the framework of the world political economy in general and the cooperation between Africa and emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil in particular. With this development, global trade patterns are increasingly changing and economic interests regarding trade and investments between Asian, African and Latin American countries follow this scope (Chahoud, 2007; Zafar, 2007; Ewelukwa, 2011; Stuenkel, 2013). These shifts alongside macro-economic factors have implications on global migration patterns. New destinations with great economic interests related to fast economic growth, modernisation and industrialisation have emerged and attracted international migrants mostly from and to South-South regions seeking work, study, business or trade related opportunities across their respective country's frontiers (Bodomo, 2010; Mohan, 2013).

Chinese presence in Africa is subject to important migration flows with individual migrants, often entrepreneurs or traders, who look for business opportunities in Africa. Likewise, China – traditionally known as an important emigration country with 33 million of ethnic Chinese living outside of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong according to the World Bank (2011) – is becoming an emerging destination for economic migration. China's economic boom, trade liberalisation and modernisation have attracted foreign migrants with different origins, background and motives within China's borders.

Since the launch and implementation of its 'open door' policy in the late 1970s and its 'go out' strategy in the late 1990s, China has increased its trade and investments cooperation with the rest of the world in general and with Africa in particular. Its accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in December 2001 has somehow changed global trade and investments patterns (Fewsmith, 2001; Shafaeddin, 2002). Therefore, from being only a major beneficiary of FDI in the past – even though it is still aiming at attracting more foreign investments in the services sector to sustain its economy –, China has also become an important emerging investor in Africa. In 2011, Sino-African trade reached US\$ 160 billion (estimated more than US\$ 200 billion in 2012) and Chinese investments (in stock) in Africa totaled more than US\$ 13 billion (MOFCOM, 2012; National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2012).

However, beside the macro trade and investments which mostly involve state companies' businesses, individual traders and entrepreneurs contribute to increasing trade volumes between China and Africa. Following Beijing's political economy strategy to enable China's contribution to Overseas Foreign Direct Investment (OFDI), Chinese companies mainly State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) have paved their way into African countries in order to secure resources and seek markets to sell Chinese manufacturing goods.

Such venture is followed by social and human capital movement into Africa; therefore leading to the presence of Chinese employees and workers first in state projects run by Chinese multinational companies in Africa and later individual entrepreneurs, small traders and businessmen who willingly travel beyond the Chinese borders for economic opportunities (Alden and Davies, 2006; Alden *et al.*, 2008). In Sino-African relations, South-South migration across borders has led to South-South trade mainly in the informal sector of Sino-African markets.

The openness of markets for trade has increasingly enabled world traders to seek for more opportunities beyond their respective borders. Due to the fact that the Chinese and African traders travel beyond their respective borders back and forth or relocate to Africa or China, they are part of a temporary or permanent migration phenomenon. In the current global economic structure, industrialisation entails economic globalisation and complete economic globalisation necessitates four basic principles: trade, investment, technology and migration (Marafa, 2010). The lack of industrialisation policies to enable the manufacturing sector in Africa to take off in order to satisfy Africans' needs for consumer goods, the fierce competition faced by Chinese entrepreneurs and traders and the restriction to provide them with loans and credit to develop their activities to the detriment of State Owned Enterprises have led Chinese small traders to eye African markets (Jing Gu, 2009; Xiaofang Shen, 2013).

After its openness to the world, its trade liberalisation, economic and industrial reforms which led to its economic growth, China with an abundant 'cheap' manpower to produce affordable manufactured goods has slowly, yet strongly become a favorite destination for African traders. First amongst the destinations is Guangzhou because of its proximity to Hong Kong and Shenzhen which have been entry points for foreign investments in mainland China due to the establishment of the first Chinese Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Southern China to boost trade and investments. Since the early 2000s, the number of African traders in Guangzhou has been growing and their presence in the trade sector has become important. Bodomo (2010) argues that while it is true that there have been Africans in China, including students and diplomats, for a long time, there had never been, until now, a massive presence of Africans from different backgrounds actually migrating to China to start up businesses serving both African and Chinese consumers. Furthermore, Bredeloup (2012, p.27) states: "in the early 2000s, nationals of Sub-Saharan Africa who had settled in the market places of Hong Kong, Bangkok, Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur, moved to Guangzhou and opened offices in the upper floors of buildings in *Baiyun* and *Yuexiu* districts"; yet these experiences are not very well remarked.

This paper attempts to contribute to our understanding of this dual flow of migrants. The comparative approach adopted in the paper: African traders in China and Chinese traders in Africa is the first of this type in Sino-African migration studies. Such study gives us insights about South-South migration linked to trade and socio-economic development in general and the growing economic migration trend in Sino-African relations in particular. It enables us to clarify the composition (profile, background, country or province of origin, age, gender) of both groups, their experiences, their business network and organisation, contribution to socio-economic development in their home and host country.

The paper focuses on Sino-African small traders in Africa (with Senegal as a case country) and China, with a particular focus on Yiwu-Zhejiang province in Eastern China. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in Yiwu and Dakar respectively in June and October 2012 and looks at the composition, background, profile, business organisation and networks of Chinese traders in Africa (Senegal) and African traders in China (Yiwu) and their contribution to socio-economic development in their home and host countries. It will first analyse South-South trade and migration in the context of Sino-African relations and then draw a comparative analysis on Chinese migration to Africa (with a focus on Senegal) and African migration to China (mainly Yiwu) with a particular emphasis on the Chinese traders in Dakar and the African traders in Yiwu.

2. South-South trade and migration in Sino-African relations

With the growing South-South relations⁷, changes have been noticed in global trade patterns. Economic and political cooperation is established and on the increase between emerging countries; thus shaping and transforming the world political economic order (Bilal, 2012; Fues, 2013; Steunkel, 2013). Economic interests regarding trade and investments between Asian, African and Latin American countries follow this pattern. Therefore, new destinations with fast economic growth and modernisation for investments and trade have emerged and attracted international migrants mostly from and to South-South regions seeking for work or business related opportunities beyond their respective country's frontiers (Bodomo, 2010; Bredeloup, 2012). Closer economic, political and diplomatic relations in the Global South have led to new trade and migration patterns bringing developing economies together. In this regard, we explore the trade and migration patterns in South-South relations in general and in China-Africa relations in particular.

After the introduction of its 'open door' policy in the late 1970s, China has shown interests to cooperate more with the rest of the world for Inward Foreign Direct Investment (IFDI). In the late 1990s, China's 'go out' strategy became a next step, motivating Chinese companies' venture overseas and has contributed to boosting Chinese foreign trade and investments. From US\$ 6.4 billion in 1999, the trade volume between China and Africa has reached more than US\$ 200 billion in 2012 (MOFCOM, 2012). The Sino-African economic cooperation since 2000 has involved Chinese multinational companies venturing to Africa following China's political economy dynamics in order to invest overseas (Outward Foreign Direct Investment) and play a role in the new world political and economic order. Chinese MNCs' presence in Africa comes along with human capital movement from China to Africa (Alden and Davies, 2006; Alden *et al.*, 2008).

From the traditional South-North migration, South-South migration today is the mainstream of international migration. Due to economic and financial crisis in Europe and the United States, difficulties to establish in many European countries since the expansion of the EU to many Eastern European developing countries whose populations migrate to the Northern and Western developed countries seeking for economic and social opportunities, South-South migration has become more evident for thousands of Africans and Asians venturing abroad (Politzer, 2008; Skeldon, 2011). Developing and middle-income countries are first concerned with migration processes; not only due to the much talked-about migration movements towards developed countries but also because South-South exchanges are now larger than South-North movements (World Bank, 2007).

⁷ South-South cooperation is seen as a way to stimulate economic growth, increase the commonly low levels of trade among Southern economies, reduce the dependency on Northern markets and capital, and, in general, place the countries of the South in the position to take greater control of their economic fortunes.

Since the early 2000s the debate among policymakers, academics in Africa and China has focused on Sino-African migration, on both aspects: Chinese in Africa and Africans in China. The large communities of African migrants in Guangdong (South China) and at a certain stage in Yiwu and the establishment of several 'Chinatowns in Africa (Dakar/Senegal, Johannesburg/South Africa, Port Louis/Mauritius, Antananarivo/Madagascar, Luanda/Angola and' others) have attracted researchers' attention to study the motives, the social and economic impacts in migrants' host and home countries and the local populations' perceptions on Chinese migrants in Africa and African migrants in China. Even though a number of research projects have been conducted on Chinese migration to Africa (Kernen and Vuillet, 2008; Ma Mung, 2008; Bertoncello and Bredeloup, 2009; Park, 2009; Dittgen, 2010), less has been done on African migration to China. However, during the past years, the number of studies on Africans in China has been growing (Bodomo, 2010; Bredeloup, 2012; Li Zhigang *et al.*, 2012).

3. Sino-African migration in Africa and China

3.1 Chinese migration to Africa

Recent changes in China's emigration policies (issuance of passport, openness of borders and freedom for Chinese people to travel beyond their borders) have enabled Chinese citizens to travel to other regions of the world for various reasons: tourism, education, employment, trade or business. The 'open door' policy in 1978, the industrial and entrepreneurial reforms in the 1980s to replace the 'work unit'⁸ have driven millions of Chinese to go abroad (mainly in Southeast Asian countries: Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and other states already were home to a substantial Overseas Chinese community). While the number of Chinese migrants in South-East Asia, East Asia, Europe, North America and Australia remains very important (Xiang Biao, 2003; Ma Mung, 2008), the growing economic and political relations between China and numerous African countries from the 1990s and early 2000s have contributed to the rising flows of Chinese nationals into Africa. With reforms undertaken in China in 1985 regarding migration policies and China's 'go out' policy in the late 1990s, important flows of Chinese workers via SOEs in order to operate in state projects venture to Africa. However, when compared to the current trend of Chinese migration to Africa, the number of Chinese workers and traders in Africa were limited in scope (Park, 2009; Skeldon, 2011).

According to some scholars (Park, 2009; Skeldon, 2011) the number of Chinese migrants in Africa is more than 750,000 people. But with difficulties to have exact figures on Chinese migration to Africa, cautious assessments have set the number of Chinese migrants on the continent between 270,000 and 510,000 with South Africa hosting the largest Chinese community (Skeldon, 2011). These figures compared to the Chinese population or compared to inner-African migration look small but if we look at the expansion of Chinese migrants across Africa, they become important and merit attention.

Globalization, China's rise as an economic power, its willingness to modernise and develop, its economic interests linked to market openness and its accession to the World Trade Organisation have strengthened Sino-African relations.

The development of trade activities in China's coastal provinces (Guangdong and Zhejiang) has favoured movement of people who leave the inland provinces in search for business activities in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Hangzhou. The earlier openness of these cities to foreign direct investment, their proximity to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan and the establishment of the Special Economic Zones mainly in Guangdong and Fujian have contributed to the creation of international markets first near Chinese borders and later with the rest of the world. Trade and migration in and through land border areas have therefore increased rapidly (Xiang Biao, 2003).

In order to promote its foreign direct investment policy and aid programme towards developing countries including those in Africa, Chinese companies have exported labour to work on projects in Africa (Alden and Davies, 2006; Alden *et al.*, 2008). Even though such projects contribute to infrastructure development in Africa (Chen, 2009; Rugamba and Schiere, 2011), they have other important implications (environmental and sustainable development concerns, water pollution, displacement, competition, norms and standards issues) not often discussed in the literature. Today, Chinese presence in Africa is also subject to important migration flows with individual migrants (entrepreneurs or traders) who decide to look for business opportunities in Africa. The Chinese presence in Africa was marked by Chinese companies' footprint in Africa, also bringing along Chinese workers on short-term labour contracts (two or three years, sometimes renewable) to engage in state projects in construction, infrastructure, mining and oil (Alden *et al.*, 2008). Such movement from Chinese companies, employers and employees was part of Beijing's political and economic strategies for its global position. Although the majority of Chinese workers in Africa return to China at the end of their contract, some decide to stay in Africa for business activities (Park, 2012). Those who remain in Africa often aspire to build their existence around knowing social and business networks in their host country and open small and medium size businesses in trade, catering, construction or hostelry ; using the capital they acquired while working in China and Africa.

Thus, beside Chinese SOEs, Multinational Corporations, China's investment in Africa is portrayed by Chinese private entrepreneurs, traders and businessmen seeking for markets but also new migrants without capital from various regions and provinces with different background. Tan-Mullins and Mohan (2009, p. 588) argue, 'economically, many large-scale Chinese firms operate in key resource sectors, but for most Africans, the Chinese presence is marked by traders in the markets'.

In different cities, Chinese migrants or newcomers are mainly dedicated to trade and business (often restaurants and small and medium enterprises). From 2000, the increasing number of Chinese traders in major African cities has created competition among them; therefore many have decided to explore other business sectors and geographical areas by settling in rural and small African towns (Carling and Haugen, 2005; Kale and Mohan, 2007).

⁸ Work unit in China is the name given to a place of employment during the period when the Chinese economy was more socialist. Before the reforms, workers were bound to their work units for life

With the Chinese economic migration to Africa, in every larger African town, there is at least one 'China shop' and Chinese shops are on the forefront of new South-South trade relations (Dobler, 2005).

While there are important flows of Chinese traders in Africa, China also keeps on attracting African traders settled in Yiwu and Guangzhou or traveling back and forth from their home countries to buy and resell 'made in China' consumer goods.

3.2. African migration to China

China is one of the world's most important emigration sources. 33 million ethnic Chinese are living outside China including Taiwan and Hong Kong according to the World Bank, 2011. It is also becoming an emerging destination for economic migration since the 'open door' policy in the late 1970s. Immigrants in China are from different continents and have settled in the 'middle kingdom' for various reasons: skilled works, studies, businesses or trade (Bertoncello and Bredeloup, 2007, p. 2; Le Bail, 2009, pp.5-10). Traditionally not known as an immigration destination as there never was a shortage of labour, China today considers issuing an immigration policy that contributes to attract people it needs to support its development, countering a shortage of skills in China.

Around the beginning of 2000, African traders have also taken the opportunity to migrate to mainland China not only due to business opportunities offered in Southern China but also related to the Asian financial crisis in 1997 (Bodomo, 2012). Because of the tightened migration policies in Europe and the United States, as well as recently the economic and financial crisis and new opportunities opening up elsewhere, immigration destinations for many Africans have changed (Bertoncello and Bredeloup, 2009; Dittgen, 2010). From the traditional destinations (Europe and North America) in the past, they discovered new destinations mainly in Asia and moved into these. The migration pattern has then shifted from South-North to South-South. Among the South-South destinations, in the past, African traders were more present in Bangkok, Dubai and Hong Kong. With increasing prices of products and high living costs in these cities, these traders decided to target China which offers competitive advantages in price and avoid a large number of 'middlemen' who supply them with Chinese products from Guangdong by adding commission on cheap prices from the factories. Migrants are not allocated randomly across countries; they rather choose their destination on the basis of economic opportunities offered by each country (Ortega and Peri, 2012).

China's trade liberalisation, economic boom and modernisation have contributed to the migration of some Africans to China. But, the most important aspect that probably attracts more and more Africans in China's largest cities is the 'made in China' products from the 'world factories' in Dongguan (Southern China) and around Yiwu that not only supply the African markets but also the rest of the world.

The number of direct flights between African and major Chinese cities have also contributed to better connectivity and the growing number of African presence in China during recent years. According to Africa Airline News, there are four flights from Guangzhou to Nairobi per week and five from Nairobi to Guangzhou with Kenya Airways, daily flights from Addis Ababa to Guangzhou and six flights to Beijing via Ethiopian Airlines. Politzer (2008) names three Chinese air companies (China Southern Airlines, China Eastern Airlines and Hainan Airlines) that offer routes to Africa. These airlines offer nonstop flights from Beijing to Cairo three times per week and a route from Beijing to Johannesburg via Guangzhou twice a week. In July 2008 Emirates airlines also began offering six flights per week to Guangzhou, with connections in Dubai for those coming from Cape Town, Lagos, Cairo, Addis Ababa, and Nairobi. Recently, South African Airways started offering three direct flights to Beijing from Johannesburg (Koetle, 2011) and Ethiopian Airlines offers four direct flights a week from Hangzhou to Addis Ababa (Williams, 2011).

Although the large number of African traders regularly go to Guangzhou and order their merchandise that they sell back in their home countries, some have decided to immigrate to this Southern Chinese city and formed an 'ethnic enclave' named 'Chocolate city' by Chinese. According to estimates from Guangzhou official immigration bureau, there are 20,000 Africans in Guangzhou (Li Zhigang *et al.*, 2007; Bodomo, 2010). This overall number remains 'insignificant' compared to the rest of Africans present in other Chinese cities for study, work and business purpose. As some researchers (Bertoncello and Bredeloup, 2009; Bodomo and Ma, 2010) have suggested African traders have settled and opened 'trading posts' in South China in order to sell Chinese manufactured products to African customers (merchants) travelling to China or based in their home countries. But today, Yiwu in Eastern China known as the world's largest commodities market with China's largest export market is slowly overtaking Guangzhou in terms of African presence in this city which is 'the warehouse' of Chinese manufactured products (Bodomo and Ma, 2010).

The aspect of Chinese traders venturing into Africa is mirroring this trend of 'mutual discovery' as trade partners. The increasing presence of Chinese traders in African markets (Senegal, South Africa, Namibia, Cabo Verde and Ghana) and African traders in China's 'city markets' (Yiwu and Guangzhou) leads us to raise questions about the profile, the composition, the background, the experiences, the business organisation and networks of Chinese traders in Africa particularly in Senegal and African traders in China (Yiwu) and how their trade activities contribute to socio-economic development in their host and home countries. To find answers to those questions, field trips were conducted in China and Senegal.

Interviews (120 in total) both in Senegal and China with traders, bankers, managers at Western Union and Money Gram, logistics companies managers, immigration officers were conducted for a period of one month spent in Dakar and one month spent in Yiwu between June and October 2012. Interviews were directly conducted by the author with different interviewees in Mandarin, English, French or Wolof (Senegal's national language, widely spoken across the country).

4. Sino-African traders in Senegal and China: composition, profile, background and business organisation

4.1 Chinese traders in Senegal: composition, profile, background and business organisation

Generally, China's presence in Africa is portrayed by investments in resources and infrastructure development and mainly focusing on African countries (Angola, Nigeria, DRC, Sudan) richly endowed with resources. China's engagement with Africa is more driven by the macro-level engagement between China and African governments and involves state projects. Increasingly, alongside macro trade and investments, today the micro-level cooperation between African and Chinese traders, entrepreneurs, businessmen is part of the broader Sino-African relations; hence the economic migration from China to Africa and from Africa to China for trade and business opportunities.

Senegal as a poor resource country has, however, attracted Chinese investments; particularly in the ICT and infrastructure building sectors—not least so since the renewal of its diplomatic ties with mainland China in 2005. Yet, in the 1990s, to contribute to infrastructure development projects, Chinese construction companies were already operating in Senegal. In Senegal, trade (informal and formal) is one of the main economic activities. With a massive production capacity due to relatively cheap and abundant manpower and a search for new markets overseas to sell 'made in China' products, China's presence in Africa has seen new actors (individual entrepreneurs, traders and businessmen) seeking markets. Therefore, Senegal with its trade opportunities has already hosted Lebanese and other Africans (Guineans, Malians and Mauritians) who operate in the different Senegalese market sectors. Since 2005, Senegal's capital city Dakar keeps on being an economic migration destination for hundreds of Chinese traders located at Centenaire and its surroundings which experienced urban, space and social transformation and increasingly becoming Senegal's 'Chinatown'.

It becomes relevant to explore this growing phenomenon which occurs in downtown Dakar; particularly in the Centenaire area which in the 1960s-1990s used to be a residential district hosting Senegalese administration officers and civil servants or otherwise the Senegalese 'bourgeoisie'. With a comparative advantage related to competitive prices offered by factories' owners and wholesalers in Yiwu and Guangzhou back in China, Chinese traders in Senegal are a growing and an important segment of the Senegalese market and constitute a competition to well established Senegalese merchants. Besides, the low purchasing power among the majority of the Senegalese not to afford expensive and high quality products contributes to the booming Chinese trade in Senegal.

All these new developments which have followed the Chinese traders' arrival in the Senegalese economy and are taking place in a short period of time and concentrated along the boulevard Charles De Gaulle compared to many African countries which have noticed an early arrival of Chinese traders merit particular attention; hence the study on Chinese traders in Senegal. At the same time it is important to study the growing migration trend in Yiwu which is becoming a growing destination for many African traders and has received less attention compared to Guangzhou where few studies on the subject have been conducted.

During the 1980s, through its cooperation with Senegal, China contributed to the development of infrastructure building with the Chinese construction company Henan Construction. In the 1990s, the Senegalese traders who were then going to Dubai, Bangkok and Hong Kong discovered the Chinese markets which offered competitive prices to buy 'made in China' consumer goods to resell in Senegal with high profit margins. The Chinese workers at Henan Construction therefore saw opportunities to tap into the Senegalese trade sector. With their strong connections back in China to order Chinese products directly from the factories or wholesalers in China's city markets compared to the Senegalese merchants, the Chinese workers have started to explore business possibilities. Therefore, they started bringing their family members and opening up shops after the period of their contract with Henan Construction Company.

The settlement of the first Chinese shops along Avenue Centenaire took place in early 2000. Yet in the late 1990s, more and more Chinese have migrated to Senegal, concentrating and opening small shops along the Boulevard Général de Gaulle, one of the major roads in Dakar (Dittgen, 2010). The majority of the Chinese traders interviewed by the author at Centenaire and Petersen (Allées Papa Guèye Fall) which host hundreds of Chinese shops on both sides of the avenues come from Henan province in central China, more precisely Kaifeng (a prefectural-level city) and they represent an estimated 70 or 80 per cent of the Chinese traders' community in Dakar. A few come from Sichuan, Fujian and Shanghai (interview by the author, October 2012). Even though Henan province is the 5th largest provincial economy in China, its GDP remains low compared to coastal Chinese cities and it is regarded as one of the most backward areas in China with the main economic activities being primary and mainly concentrated in agriculture and mining. This somehow tells about the previous activities that many Chinese traders in Dakar had in China: most of them were factory workers or farmers in China (interviews by the author, October 2012). Very few were running businesses in China. A young Chinese shopkeeper at Centenaire also from Henan states that his father was a driver and his mother owned a restaurant. Friends told them about the opportunities in Senegal and they decided to come (interview by the author, 8 October 2012). However, a Shanghaiense shop owner's decision to travel to Senegal and open up a shop was different. In 2004, he travelled to Dakar for the first time as a tourist and realized that trade opportunity and business environment were good. He went back to China and decided to come back and settle in Dakar. In Shanghai, he was running a business in the machinery and technology sector (interview by the author, 22 October 2012). With the savings made while working in China and with a family member already established in Dakar, they arranged their trip to the Senegalese capital to join their relative's businesses. Well-established Chinese traders in Dakar use their connections with Senegalese agents/brokers to organise the arrival of their wife, children, siblings, cousins, nephews or friends.

Chinese traders who arrived in Dakar in the early 2000s own many shops in Centenaire and Petersen. For instance, a well-known Chinese woman from Kaifeng (Henan) owns seven shops only in Centenaire and they are all run by her family members (interview by the author, 14 October 2012).

Between 2005 and 2009, growing migration flows from China to Senegal happened; thus changing the urban environment along the Boulevard Général De Gaulle. The demographic profile of Chinese traders in Senegal is as follow: more rural men than women mainly single sometimes followed by their wives if married, in their late 20s or early 30s with a low or in many cases without any education background or work experience.

Many Chinese interviewed at the Centenaire Chinese shops state that they are shopkeepers rather than shop owners; the owners developed other businesses or went back to China. The shop owners arranged and paid for their trip. They live in the premises of the shops or in the neighbourhood of Centenaire or Petersen. Their accommodation and food are provided by the shop owner and their salary is only paid to them or to their family once back to China (interview by the author, 16 October 2012).

Even though generally the Chinese traders are seen to be a homogeneous group which comes from the same country, province or village and speak the same dialect, there are disparities in any of those aspects. In fact, Chinese traders do not have any close relations (except for those who have family ties) and usually do not interact with one and another.

Chinese traders in Senegal follow Senegalese citizens' fashion and the customers' needs to supply the market with Chinese consumer goods. They send samples of products to family members or to suppliers in China who will be in charge of placing the orders from the Chinese factories in Yiwu or Guangzhou. All the products are customer-tailored and particularly target Senegalese customers with low purchasing power able to buy cheap Chinese manufactured goods.

In China's foreign trade, Yiwu and Guangzhou play an important role in China's exports to the rest of the world. Within China itself, they remain the distribution hubs of Chinese products to the inland provinces' markets. If African traders traveling to or settled in China buy their products from these Chinese city-markets, their Chinese counterparts in major African cities get their supplies from there. But the Chinese have a comparative advantage compared to the African traders who order their merchandise from China. They have long-term relationship with the Chinese factories or wholesalers and know which supplier offers them competitive prices in order to maximise their profit margins when the products are sold in Senegal or elsewhere in Africa.

There is regular communication via phone calls or internet between the Chinese traders, their suppliers and family members remained in China to get 'made in China' products. The shipment of the products is done via Chinese logistics companies using MAERSK shipping company (a Danish global player) which offers regular services in Senegal (interview by the author, 16 October 2012). It takes 45 days for the containers to arrive in Dakar. Once the containers arrive Chinese traders arrange customs clearance through a Senegalese forwarding agent who studied in China in the 1990s, runs a logistics business and who is well known in the Chinese community who contacts MAERSK and the customs officers to get the containers out (interview by the author, 16 October). After they get released at the port of Dakar, the containers are transported to the warehouses (often shared) that Chinese traders have rented in the neighborhood of Centenaire or Petersen where the goods are stocked or sometimes directly conveyed by Guinean workers using rickshaws who receive between 3,000 and 5,000 CFA francs (US\$ 6-10) for such service. Chinese traders with bigger space stock their products at the back of their shops.

Sometimes Chinese shop owners take a trip to China and go directly to the factories to order their products. A Chinese shopkeeper in Petersen mentioned that his father (the shop owner) regularly travels to China twice or three times a year to visit the factories, places orders and arranges the shipment of the products to Dakar (interview by the author, 23 October 2012). A variety of products are sold by Chinese traders in Dakar: footwear, clothing, textile products, decoration items, jewelry (bracelets, necklaces and rings), leather products, accessories (sunglasses, watches, belts, bags, wallets), toys, glassware, cups, plates, kitchenware and bedding. Footwear and clothing are the most traded products at the Chinese shops in Dakar. With the fierce and rising competition among the traders, some have decided to look at other products segments (leather products, cooking utensils or hair products) and diversify their trade activities. Compared to other countries (South Africa and Namibia) where there are a few Chinese wholesalers who supply Chinese retail traders with Chinese consumer goods, all Chinese traders at Centenaire and Petersen operate as wholesalers and retailers, selling products to Senegalese retailers or customers. In the shops there are very often one or two Chinese people with a Senegalese shopkeeper; the latter mainly talks to the customers. Chinese traders' language skills are very limited; they do not speak French or Wolof at all or even if they speak them, it is in a very 'broken language'. Customers bargain with the Senegalese shopkeepers, but it is the Chinese shop owner or shopkeeper who collects the money.

4.2 Relationship with Senegalese and experiences in Senegal

In general, there is no contract signed between Chinese shop owners and their Senegalese shopkeepers. Such arrangement is made on purpose by the Chinese shop owners to quickly dismiss their Senegalese employees in case they are not satisfied with their services. Besides, Chinese traders in Senegal face challenges and difficulties. Culture differences and communication remain key challenge for Chinese traders even for those who came earlier in the 2000s. Living with family members in the premises of their shops and forming enclaves around Centenaire and its surroundings keep Chinese distant from their host society. The only relations they have with the Senegalese are business related. Therefore, integration into the Senegalese society becomes difficult, resulting in loneliness for many of them. A young Chinese shopkeeper who dropped out of middle school and brought to Senegal by his father argues: 'I really miss home but I need to make money; therefore I have to stay here and probably later take over the business' (interview by the author, 20 October 2012). The new arrivals of Chinese traders from China come along with problems related to competition among Chinese themselves who found it very fierce and mentioned that the business is not lucrative as it was before. The products prices are becoming lower and lower because of some Chinese traders who benefit from price competitiveness through strong networks in China to order manufactured goods at a very low price (interview by the author, 19 October 2012).

The lack of safety among Chinese traders has been voiced even though they mentioned that they also face the same issues with local people mainly Guineans from Conakry who engage with Chinese traders (transportation of products from the warehouses to the shops) and are also very present in the Senegalese informal trade sector since the Independence (interview by the author, 19 October 2012). The presence of different groups (Senegalese, Lebanese, Guineans and Chinese) in the Senegalese informal trade sector leads to tensions linked to competition. A Chinese shop owner at Centenaire stated that: 'some Chinese have died here. Some have lost important sums of money. Last year a Chinese woman died in her house while her son went to China. During the 2012

Senegalese presidential elections period, three Chinese shops were burnt down due to political protests' (interview by the author, 19 October 2012). Furthermore the Chinese traders in Dakar have complained about not receiving any support from their embassy to solve different problems they face while living and operating in Senegal. A Chinese trader at Centenaire states: 'the Chinese embassy is not involved in our business' (interview by the author, 22 October 2012). The strong economic ties between China and Africa have not only driven Chinese into Africa but also Africans into China

4.3 African traders in China: composition, profile, background and business organisation

In order to satisfy their customers' needs for affordable consumer products in their home countries, African traders have targeted Yiwu's wholesale markets which offer competitive prices. The following results have been obtained through the author's interviews with various groups of African traders from different African regions.

The African traders' community in Yiwu is diverse in terms of their home country. The traders come from different regions of Africa. Le Bail (2009, p.8) states: 'there are no official statistics of the foreign residents in Yiwu by nationality'. She further argues that according to the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the city, even though there are 2,300 foreign trading agencies, the number of foreign traders permanently living in Yiwu is much higher. The largest number of African traders in Yiwu is from Northern African countries ranking as follows in terms of presence in Yiwu (Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya). From West Africa, Mauritania has the largest community and countries such as Mali, Nigeria, Guinea Conakry, Senegal and Ghana have considerable number of traders established in Yiwu (interviews by the author, June 2012). From Central Africa, Cameroon remains the country of origin of most of the traders even though the Democratic Republic of Congo has an important traders' community. Angolan and Mozambican traders represent the biggest traders' population from Southern Africa. Among Eastern African states, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania have the largest number of traders in Yiwu city. African traders in Yiwu can be distinguished in three groups: the trade agents, the entrepreneurs and the temporarily traveling traders. Each group plays specific roles in facilitating Sino-African trade.

The trade agents arrived in Yiwu in the 2000s, sometimes from other countries in Europe and the United States where they have established businesses and strong networks. Prior to their establishment in China, they have sojourned (short stays) several times in Yiwu and Guangzhou for business purpose. With their early stay in Yiwu, they established and owned businesses in Yiwu market and its surroundings. They play an important role in facilitating trade negotiations for African traders who regularly travel from Africa to Yiwu to buy commodities that they resell in their home countries. The African trade agents' jobs consist in welcoming African merchants in Yiwu, sometimes hosting them in their apartments with cheap accommodation fees compared to the hotels rooms. They offer interpretation services to their customers, provide warehouses and facilitate the forwarding of the commodities through Chinese logistics and international shipping companies and export services; for example customs clearance (interviews by the author, June 2012).

The entrepreneurs work differently. With their long stay in Yiwu and the good relationship built with some Chinese wholesalers in Yiwu markets and factories, they take orders from traders located in their home countries in particular and other African countries in general where they have business ties. Their knowledge of China's markets and factories in general and Yiwu in particular, Mandarin and good contacts in various offices involved in customs, shipping and forwarding enable them to process all the purchases needed by a merchant based in Africa. They have their trading companies. They negotiate better prices with Chinese factories to supply them with products and sell directly to other African traders located in Africa or traveling to China. They somehow use the formal international trade system by issuing for instance letters of credit and using the *incoterms*. According to interviews conducted by the author, almost all their transactions are done via phone call, fax and e-mail correspondence and the financial transactions are often done via banks.

The temporarily traveling traders constitute the large number of African traders in China's city markets. They regularly travel to the 'world's commodities centre' for products order and shopping for cheap goods (clothing, footwear, stationery, electronics and garments) to resell in African markets. African traders who regularly and periodically travel to Yiwu are part of temporary migration. Their role in Sino-African trade is also non negligible. The UNCTAD (2009, p. 4) states: 'temporary migration plays a particularly important role in advancing economic growth and development of both sending and receiving countries whenever workers travel for business, employment, educational or cultural reasons'.

Alongside the Chinese traders, more and more African traders traveling to China or living and owning trade businesses in China's city-markets (Guangzhou and Yiwu) play a non-negligible role in making Chinese goods available in African markets. Mathews (2011) highlights the way African traders who travel to Hong Kong (Chungking Mansions) bring knockoff Chinese products back to their country in their travel bags and suitcases for resale. As Mathews (2011, p. 149) further argues, 'it is about low-end globalisation different from the formal model of globalisation where big multinationals are the actors. It's globalisation done by individual traders carrying goods in their suitcases back and forth from their home countries'.

One of the author's interviewees at Yiwu international logistics centre stated that Africans at Yiwu international trade city constitute 40% of the foreign traders (interviews by the author, June 2012). Whatever their exact number might be, their footprint in the Sino-African trade networks is visible. From the orders to the shipment of goods, they supply major African trade hubs such as Lagos, Dakar, Bamako, Johannesburg and Accra. The same interviewee mentioned that African traders choose their shipping company depending on the reliability of its services in their country of origin. Therefore, traders from West Africa often prefer the Danish MAERSK LINE which has regular services to West Africa, while those who are from North, East, Central and South Africa respectively choose MAERSK LINE and the French *Compagnie Générale Maritime* (CMA CGM), the Singaporean *Pacific International Lines* (PIL), the Swiss *Mediterranean Shipping Company* (MSC), the Taiwanese *EVERGREEN*. A Chinese logistics company manager mentioned that before the Arab spring, 30 to 40 containers (40 feet) a week were sent to Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco through its office (interviews by the author, June 2012). The containers are filled with consumer goods (clothing, footwear, accessories, garments, stationery, furniture and construction material) purchased at Yiwu market, transported to the port of Ningbo where 98% of the products from Yiwu transit before reaching Africa and other continents (interviews by the author,

June 2012). While some African traders have the means to acquire and pay for entire containers, others do groupings by buying or sharing cubic meters in a container. The African traders' knowledge of the international logistics chain and its different segments while trading thus makes available a wide range of Chinese products in Africa.

The presence of African traders in China comes along with challenges and difficulties. With a changing business landscape in China mainly due to economic reforms leading more towards a consumption economy rather than an export economy, African traders in China's 'city markets' face challenges for the future of their businesses. Generally at a small scale, African traders' businesses and trade activities may become less effective in the long run as many Chinese factories are relocating to neighboring countries such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Cambodia.

4.4 Relationship with Chinese and experiences in China

It is relevant to mention that in such informal business environment based on small trade and counterfeit goods (even though China is trying to solve issues related to intellectual property) where nearly all transactions are based on cash; there are high risks of losses. To do business in China is challenging in the first place. Some Africans have made high profits out of their first trips to China. Though they managed to build strong commercial ties with African traders settled in China, Chinese factories' owners and Chinese wholesale traders to get their orders from China while in their home countries, many have seen their fortune vanished away through bad quality products supply or thefts. Traders carry large amounts of money in the Chinese markets. Some people in these areas take advantage of that and steal traders' money at times using violence.

Compared to Chinese traders in Africa, African traders in China face more social issues than language problems. At least some of them speak fluent Mandarin or Cantonese and feel integrated in the Chinese society. Due to the lack of knowledge about Africa among common Chinese people, social tensions linked to racism arise in streets or markets. Well established African traders in China are worried about the future of their children who are born or growing up in China where they can only go to Chinese schools (i.e. in the case of Yiwu which does not have an international school yet).

Moreover, African traders (agents, entrepreneurs and temporary travelers) have highlighted the difficulties to obtain long stay permit or visas in order to have enough time to visit the factories and markets to make orders and purchases. All of the author's interviewees have short stay permit (two weeks, few months or at most one year) sometimes renewable or not even though some run their own companies (interviews by the author, June 2012).

5. Sino-African traders in Senegal and China: contribution to socio-economic development

Migration is a social phenomenon beyond the pure economic rationale and the reasons for migration are manifold. Reasoning around motivations for migration and its net effects—taking into account the sending countries, the individual migrants and the host country—are thus disputed (Grimm, 2005). Economic migration plays a role in contributing to socio-economic development in migrants' home and host countries. Chinese traders in Dakar fall into this scope. Underdevelopment and search for socio-economic changes lead to migration of people. With their savings at home, many Chinese have decided to settle in various African countries, including Senegal which notices a rapid economic cooperation with China since 2005.

5.1 Chinese traders' contribution to socio-economic development in Senegal and China

For their trade activities, Chinese shop owners hire Senegalese shopkeepers. As stated above, every Chinese shop in Centenaire and Petersen has at least one Senegalese employee. They therefore contribute to providing employment if one considers the difficult situation of the Senegalese job market, where both the less educated and graduates have no jobs. The Senegalese employees at the Chinese shops receive between 1,500 and 2,000 CFA francs (US\$ 3-4) as a daily salary which is higher than the average minimum wage in Senegal (40,000 CFA francs/US\$ 80) and is usually paid daily or weekly.

Besides, with the flows of Chinese consumer goods exports to Senegal, many Senegalese young people particularly vendors have found opportunities to have an income to support themselves and families. A Senegalese vendor at Centenaire states: 'I manage to pay for my children school fees, ensure the household expenses and even save' (interview by the author, 18 October 2012).

It is relevant to mention that at Centenaire, next to Dakar's retail traders, there are many other Senegalese traders who periodically come from other regions to buy Chinese consumer goods to resell in their neighbourhoods. For instance, a Senegalese retail trader from the town of Mbour mentioned: 'with the establishment of the Chinese shops in Dakar, I come once a week to buy Chinese products. For instance I can buy shirts for 900 CFA francs a unit at a Chinese shop and resell them for 1,300-1,500 CFA francs' (interview by the author, 8 October 2012). A Senegalese retail traders' representative sees the Chinese traders' presence in Dakar as positive. He argues: 'the arrival of Chinese traders in the Senegalese informal trade sector somehow contributes to create economic activities for many jobless people in Dakar'. All the Chinese shop owners in Dakar pay taxes and customs fees; therefore contribute to the Senegalese economy. From the Chinese presence in the small trade sector in Dakar, some Senegalese retail traders who used to buy and resell Chinese products now own shops or stores around Centenaire and travel to China to bring in Chinese consumer goods to place in the Senegalese business market. Their success keeps on motivating more small traders in Senegal.

There are also additional and immediate gains from Chinese shops for Senegalese: the Chinese traders pay rent—often more elevated than if renting out to local tenants—for their shops, warehouses and houses at Centenaire and around Petersen. The payment of rent by the Chinese traders contributes to support some Senegalese households whose parents retired or who don't have sufficient financial means.

However, even though the Chinese traders contribute to socio-economic development in Senegal, their presence comes with tensions. The Chinese traders' presence in the trade sector in Senegal is seen as a competition to the Senegalese local traders, businessmen and entrepreneurs even though the majority of the Senegalese with low purchasing power find interests in acquiring cheap Chinese consumer goods. The competition between Chinese and Senegalese traders at times has led to tensions and protests.

Trade unions (UNACOIS and ASCOSEN), the first defending the traders and manufacturers rights and the second representing the Senegalese consumers were often involved in those protests. In Senegal trade unions have demonstrated against what they have called the unfair competition of the Chinese merchants while the consumers echoed to let the Chinese live in peace (Moumouni, 2006).

On the Chinese side, Chinese migrants were historically not looked upon positively. While during the Cultural Revolution, Chinese migrants or Overseas Chinese are considered as capitalists or 'enemies of the nation', today they contribute to China's economic integration and growth through accumulation of social capital to reinvest in their home country or regions. Through China's market openness, Chinese traders have enabled exchanges and cooperation with overseas markets to promote China's global exports.

The role played by migrants in the development of their home countries or regions is determinant and in many cases contributes to economic development based on human capital movement across borders. In China, diaspora migrants are involved in the country's economic, political and social transformation. The connection that Chinese migrants have with their provinces and villages has implications for their local economies. By venturing to Africa in search of economic opportunities through trade and business, many Chinese migrants have changed their previous social status (factory workers, construction workers or rural peasants) to becoming traders and entrepreneurs. Most of the early immigrants were from Guangdong and Fujian provinces and they were illiterate or poorly educated peasants who intended to look for a living abroad and earn a surplus to feed their families at home (Li Xing and Opoku-Mensah, 2008). The Chinese traders' earnings made out of their trade activities in Africa including Senegal help their family members at home to start or expand businesses and finance projects.

Some of the Chinese traders in Senegal still have businesses in China run by family members. With the revenues made in Senegal, they reinvest back home to develop their businesses. Some of the traders originally from rural areas have been able to buy houses in urban cities and improve their families' situations. Even though there is a lack of official data from money transfer companies Western Union and Money Gram in Senegal about remittances by Chinese nationals, money is sent via informal ways (mainly at airports through customs) back to China to pay for orders, family subsidies or invest in other businesses. Their regular and frequent orders of products from Chinese factories to supply the high demand for cheap Chinese consumer goods in Senegal contributes to boosting the Chinese exports; hence China's economic growth—not least so for the past three decades. Chinese traders who brought their children with them somewhat contribute to knowledge transfer in the business sector: once the business is well established, the children can take over. Such decision enables their children to establish good contacts, know the business environment, and gain long-term business opportunities in Senegal and China. In the past, this has been the case of Lebanese and Guinean traders in Senegal whose children now own shops or manage the family businesses (O'Brien, 1975; Boumedouha, 1990).

5.2 African traders' contribution to socio-economic development in China and their home countries

With their interests in setting up businesses in Yiwu, the growing presence of African traders has created new entrepreneurship among the Chinese population in the city and its surroundings. African traders' innovative business ideas to diversify their activities in different trade sectors keep on motivating Chinese entrepreneurs to start new specific businesses to develop with them and the rest of the world. With such development and opportunities, many Chinese have also moved to Yiwu in search of jobs (trade, logistics, shipping, hostelry or interpretation). Almost all the African traders who opened up business in Yiwu hire Chinese for administrative purpose (such as tax payment, customs clearance or shipping) and interpretation services. Even though a number of the African traders can somewhat communicate in Mandarin, they prefer to have their Chinese employees to deal with such tasks with the Chinese administration.

African traders in China (Yiwu and Guangzhou) contribute also to the formation of social capital in their home countries. The profits and revenues they make through their trade activities are sent to their countries as remittances to support their families or as capitals to open up new businesses or develop already owned businesses. The case of a Mauritanian interviewee falls into this scope. Before settling in Yiwu in 2004, he already owned shops in Nouakchott, the capital city of Mauritania. From his benefits in Yiwu, he makes remittances to sustain his ongoing businesses back home. Most of the author's interviewees keep supporting their family left in Africa by transferring money not only via *Western Union* and *Money Gram* services but also through their own informal networks. Due to the expensive costs of South-South remittances compared to North-South remittances, those informal money transfer systems again based on trust from the sending to the receiving places are developing in order to avoid high transfer fees and exchange commissions. The World Bank (2007, p. 10) argues: 'high costs and lack of access to convenient remittances services encourage migrants to use informal channels'.

The experience and the know-how of African traders in other countries and China are shared with trading networks in their home and host countries. The interactive social and business relationships, the use of modern management methods and information technology, trust among fellow members, transparent business practices which are the characteristics of the 'new African entrepreneurs' contribute to increasing trade (McDade and Spring, 2005). The skills that they develop by doing business in China are somehow transmitted to family members and other traders in Africa who will probably be interested in operating with China. Ortega and Peri (2012, p. 3) argue: 'Immigrants contribute to their home countries in a variety of ways: besides raw labor, they bring new ideas and skills, increasing the diversity of productive inputs and becoming a potentially important vehicle for the international diffusion of knowledge'.

6. Conclusion

International trade and migration patterns have changed since the rise of emerging powers like India, China or Brazil and their growing economic and political cooperation with African countries. These new developments among South-South countries come along with new economic partners for investments and trade (movement of social capital) driving the mobility of people (movement of human capital) beyond their respective borders for economic migration. During these recent years the growing cooperation mainly through investments and trade between China and African countries has seen thousands of Chinese settling in major African cities and small towns and important number of Africans more and more interested in China's 'city markets' (Guangzhou and Yiwu).

While China is the largest source of emigration, it faces challenges related to its large and diverse overseas migrant population. Yet in 2005 the Chinese government issued an immigration policy to deal with migration issues within its borders. Today, the country through its national talent development plan (2010-2020) is in dire need of foreign expertise and at the same is putting in place policies to attract well-educated and qualified overseas professionals and graduates (Wang, 2011; Zhao and Zhu, 2009). However in the meantime, in its growing economic relationship with African countries, Chinese migration to Africa is increasing. Within the South-South cooperation framework in which China and African countries have strengthened political, economic and diplomatic ties, Chinese and Africans have moved beyond their respective frontiers to seek for opportunities in Africa and in China; thus economic migration. If foreign migration has in the past been and still is an issue for European and North American countries (with the so-called South-North migration), today African countries and China need to address issues related to the increasing flows of Sino-African migrant workers and traders.

As a comparative study looking at Chinese in Africa and Africans in China, the paper can serve as an example of illustration on South-South migration in general and Sino-African migration in particular. It can be used in graduate study programmes (migration, economics, development) with a particular focus on Sino-African relations as it links migration/trade/development. Compared to other countries (South Africa, Namibia and Cabo Verde) where the Chinese traders have adjusted to new economic situations to develop other businesses, expand their activities or move to different untapped places and cities which offer better business opportunities and less competition, the paper can contribute to the policy debate of Senegalese officials for a better management of growing flows at times complex of Chinese traders in Senegal.

In Sino-African relations, South-South trade and migration through globalisation of markets are shaping new arena of engagement between China and African governments and will not leave the policymakers aside. Yet various issues and challenges are awaiting decision makers both in China and Africa to deal with important migration waves following the scope of low-end globalisation.

After all these years of fast double-digit economic growth, China is facing numerous challenges to sustain its economy. With the African traders in perpetual search for high profit margins while looking at relatively affordable markets for their merchandises, will new destinations within the South-South context not emerge? With the economic reforms in place in China to turn into boosting the local Chinese market for more internal demand for consumption and measures taken in some African countries (Malawi, Nigeria and Botswana) to counter the Chinese traders' expansion to rural areas and prevent their presence in the retail trade sector, will Chinese consumer goods in the long run still be satisfying African populations with a low purchasing power?

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